UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/SR.188
22 June 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 188th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 17 June 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCCUPATION BY ISRAEL OF THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM, AND OTHER ARAB TERRITORIES

1. The CHAIRMAN said that since its inception, the Committee had clearly understood that the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories was a sine qua non for the exercise of Palestinian rights and the attainment of a just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions. For that reason, the Committee had given priority in its original recommendations to the Security Council to the development of a plan to ensure such withdrawal. Those recommendations had been endorsed every year by the General Assembly, but the Security Council had been unable to act upon them because of the veto of a permanent member. In the absence of action by the Security Council, the military occupation had continued and even been consolidated. The devastation it had caused not only to the Palestinian territories, but also to neighbouring countries, was well known; the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Six Day War coincided with the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Lebanon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila. In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General on 5 June 1992, he had given a brief account of the increasingly grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory during the 25 years of military occupation. The occupation could only be maintained through increasingly ruthless measures, which the current Israeli Government seemed determined to pursue in defiance of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other human rights instruments, and also in disregard of a sizeable sector of its own public.

2. Despite the valiant efforts of UNRWA and other international and non-governmental organizations, the situation had continued to deteriorate, particularly since the beginning of the intifadah nearly five years earlier. The number of casualties had increased steadily, at least one quarter being children under 16, and Israel had responded not with efforts to work out a political solution, but rather with violent repression. The Israeli leadership did not yet seem to have realized that security and peace could not be brought about purely by military action, but must result from mutual accommodation. It was imperative that appropriate measures should be taken at the international level to ensure that Israel respected the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and that adequate protection was provided to Palestinians in the occupied territories.

3. Of even greater concern was the Israeli policy of de facto annexation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories: Israel had relentlessly appropriated ever more land for its own use, established settlements and expanded existing ones, and moved its own citizens to the occupied land. Land-use plans and other economic development measures had been geared to further fragmenting Palestinian land and integrating large portions of the occupied territories into the Israeli economy. The process had accelerated even more since the beginning of the Madrid peace process, in an obvious and

(The Chairman)

avowed effort to create irreversible facts on the ground. Israel was telling the world that in a few years, hundreds of thousands of Jews would be living in the occupied territories and that the notion of territorial compromise would fade away like a bad dream.

4. However, no such statements could turn the occupation into an irreversible fact or make it any more acceptable to the international community. The Security Council and the General Assembly had affirmed that the measures taken by Israel to change the demographic composition and the status of occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, were null and void, and had called for an end to the settlement policy and for the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

5. The international consensus that completely rejected the occupation and the policy of faits accomplis pursued by Israel must be reaffirmed, and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly must be implemented, in order for a peaceful, but also just, settlement of the question of Palestine to be achieved.

6. Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the convening of the current meeting of the Committee reflected the international community's great concern with the continuation of the occupation, and for a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem and its core, the question of Palestine. The United Nations had always attached the utmost importance to the endeavour to achieve such a settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people.

7. The current Arab-Israeli negotiations had proved that dialogue was possible; the framework for such negotiations had been provided by the Security Council in its relevant resolutions. The General Assembly had welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid on 30 October 1991 as a significant step towards peace. It was hoped that the Conference would result in agreements that would satisfy all parties concerned and allow the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. While that process took place, however, the immediate protection of Palestinians in the occupied territory must be ensured. The intifadah had made it clear that the Palestinian people would continue to reject Israeli occupation and to struggle for the exercise of its rights. Since December 1987, hundreds had been killed and thousands wounded, including many children. Palestinians had been expelled and other measures had been instituted despite many resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and other United Nations bodies.

8. The international community unanimously considered that Israel must respect its obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the

(Mr. Jonah)

Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, whose signatories, in particular, had an obligation to ensure respect for its provisions in the occupied territories.

9. The Committee was a valuable forum for helping to advance the peace process and the prospect of a just peace in the Middle East and a lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

10. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) noted that it had been 25 years since Israel had occupied the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories. That was the core of the Middle East problem and the source of all related problems: 25 years of occupation was not a normal event in the life of a people. The Palestinian people had suffered in many ways because of Israel's ongoing attacks and violations of the Charter and of Security Council resolutions.

11. The Security Council had adopted more than 20 resolutions on the situation in the Arab territories; none had been respected by Israel. The General Assembly, too, as well as other agencies, had enacted resolutions; none had been complied with. Moreover, Israeli violations of international law had been compounded by its transgressions against natural law. The phenomenon of the intifadah was too well known to need any elaboration.

12. The approach taken by Israel could be called settlement colonialism. Israel's plan was to occupy land, empty if possible, and to nip in the bud any desire to establish a Palestinian State. If that situation was allowed to continue, the Palestinian people was in danger of experiencing a new tragedy no less serious than that of 1948. It was regrettable that the time available to prevent such a tragedy was so short.

13. It was true that a peace process had been initiated, but absolutely no progress whatsoever had been made. The reason for its failure was clear: Israeli leaders refused openly and every day to leave the occupied territories. What was more, they denied the very existence of the Palestinian people and refused to deal with the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization. Time was running out, and the world must react rapidly if any results were to be expected from the peace process and if the current situation was not to deteriorate. The United Nations and its associated agencies must act, each according to its mandate but interdependently. The Committee had special responsibilities in that regard, and a special political role. The role of the Division for Palestinian Rights in the United Nations Secretariat should also be strengthened.

14. The United Nations must respond to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people, taking into account the situation in the occupied Arab territories and the serious violations of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. The responsibility of the Security Council was fundamental in

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

that regard. Unfortunately, the failure of the Council to take effective steps had raised many doubts about its impartiality. Nevertheless, he hoped that it would be able to respond to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people and that the Secretary-General would take concrete measures to implement Security Council resolution 681 (1990) to ensure compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

15. He stressed the need for increased and more effective participation by the United Nations, and supported the position of the Secretary-General in that respect. At a time when the role of the Organization was expanding in many parts of the world, its failure to participate in efforts to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people seemed to run counter to United Nations positions in other areas.

16. His delegation supported the draft statement by the Committee on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, and hoped that it would be adopted by the Committee.

17. Mr. TLILI (Department of Public Information) said that the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine was designed to enhance understanding of the various aspects of the question and promote the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The Department pursued those objectives through a combination of multimedia activities, including the production of posters. In observing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, he was pleased to announce that the Department had released the English and French versions of a poster aimed at promoting self-determination as an inalienable right of the Palestinian people. On behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, he had the honour to present the Chairman with copies of the poster in English and French, as a symbol of the Department's close and constructive cooperation with the Committee.

18. The CHAIRMAN thanked the representative of the Department of Public Information for the poster and expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would continue to provide the Department with the resources needed to continue its activities concerning the rights of the Palestinian people.

19. Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that in the past 25 years the Palestinian people had made inestimable sacrifices and had been the victim of horrendous practices never before visited on any other people. The Israeli occupation authorities had been doing their best to efface the identity of the Palestinian people and change the demographic composition of the occupied territories through an expansionist policy. In spite of numerous United Nations resolutions and international agreements, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, those authorities continued to use lies and delaying tactics in order to avoid having to carry out their international responsibilities.

(Mr. Khouini, Tunisia)

20. The stepped-up Israeli occupation policy had resulted in the expropriation of approximately 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli authorities had expelled Palestinians, demolished houses and expropriated sources of water. International organizations such as UNHCR, ICRC and UNRWA were unable to carry out their mandates in the occupied territories because of the obstacles placed in their way by Israel. In spite of those practices, which were an aspect of daily life in the occupied territories, the Palestinian people continued to struggle for its legitimate rights and seek a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Charter of the United Nations.

21. The current peace process would succeed only if it was based on principles rooted in respect for international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. If Israel really wanted just and lasting peace in the region, it must demonstrate that by recognizing the principle of land for peace, refraining from building further settlements, and discontinuing its repressive practices, which only further aggravated the situation.

22. He expressed satisfaction at the efforts by all the international and non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to the Palestinian people, and hoped that the draft statement by the Committee would be adopted.

23. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that just and lasting peace in the Middle East could not be achieved until the Palestinian people was allowed to exercise its inalienable national rights. A comprehensive and equitable settlement of the conflict in the region could not be brought about without the total withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. For more than four decades, Israel's policies of expansionist aggression and creeping annexation and its systematic but vain attempts to obliterate the identity of the Palestinian people had continued in defiance of the will of the international community and in violation of international law. Indonesia urged Israel to carry out its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

24. The Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, recently held in Bali, had adopted a communiqué welcoming the current peace efforts aimed at bringing about a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem and calling for the speedy implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. The communiqué stressed that the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine should remain a priority objective of the Movement, and reiterated the view that a comprehensive negotiated settlement could be achieved through the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

25. His delegation called upon Israel to adopt a positive approach to the peace process by observing international treaties and implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions. It urged the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, to show the same determination in dealing with the question of Palestine that it had demonstrated during the crisis in the Gulf, and to seize the opportunity resulting from the cessation of East-West tension. Lastly, it expressed satisfaction at the laudable record of the Committee, which over the years had mobilized international support for the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people.

26. Mr. MAKKAWI (Observer for Lebanon) said that the international community must clearly recognize that only one country had been allowed to defy its will for the past 25 years. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Golan Heights and parts of southern Lebanon had elicited scores of United Nations resolutions. Israel increasingly resorted to armed repression and the violation of fundamental human rights in the Palestinian territories and Syria and Lebanon, in order to perpetuate its occupation, exploit the resources of those lands and settle many of the recent Soviet immigrants on Arab soil. It had no intention of exchanging the Arab land for peace, and had stepped up the building of settlements in the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan through the use of force against the indigenous inhabitants, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

27. Lebanon had hoped that the peace talks would result in the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the long-awaited withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon. Instead, Israel had subjected the Lebanese civilian population to regular bombardment since the beginning of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid, and had expanded the area of Lebanese territory under its occupation.

28. The people living under occupation in the Palestinian territories, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon were demonstrating to the world that they would never accept the continuation of that situation. They cherished the hope that in the end Israel would acquiesce to the will of the international community in order to ensure justice through the implementation of all the relevant United Nations resolutions.

29. He commended the Committee for the excellent work that it had carried out in support of the people in the occupied Arab territories.

30. Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine) said that the continued illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories was of grave concern to his Government and people. There was broad international agreement that the question of Palestine, which was at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, could be resolved on a just and lasting basis only if Israeli forces withdrew from Arab territories occupied since June 1967, and when there was an acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity and political independence of all the

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

States of the region, as well as their right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. A viable peace had to be based on the recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. One of the most important issues was the protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation, and the Security Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant organs of the United Nations, including the Committee, should do their best to discharge their responsibilities in order to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

31. Israel must be persuaded to stop deportation of Palestinian civilians, and accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967. The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to convene a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to discuss measures that might be taken to ensure that Israel respected its obligations. The situation of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation must be closely monitored by the Secretary-General in order that the Security Council might be kept regularly informed.

32. The implementation of such measures alone would not bring an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, which was essentially political and called for a political, negotiated solution. It was to be hoped, therefore, that future negotiations within the peace process initiated in Madrid on 30 October 1991 would produce tangible results based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and that hope had recently been encouraged by the decision of the Palestine National Council to continue its participation in the process. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories was an appropriate occasion to call on all concerned to grasp the historic opportunity, display wisdom and goodwill, and refrain from any actions that might jeopardize or in any way complicate the search for lasting peace in the Middle East. One of the most pressing issues that caused almost universal concern was the Israeli policy of confiscating land and building new settlements, including those for newly arrived Jewish immigrants. His Government shared that concern, since a number of those settlers had come from Ukraine, and called upon Israel to reconsider and abandon its policy, thereby removing one of the major obstacles to the successful conclusion of the peace talks.

33. Twenty-five years of occupation had not weakened the resolve of the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, or the determination of the international community to continue its support and assistance to the Palestinians in their just cause. The Committee and the various activities undertaken under its guidance had contributed significantly to greater understanding of the question of Palestine throughout the world, and it was to be hoped that it would continue to receive the necessary resources to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. Ukraine would continue to give its full support to the work of the Committee, and to the draft statement before it.

34. Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana) said that in the past 25 years, attitudes had hardened and hostility deepened as the division between Israel as the occupying Power and the Palestinian people had increased to the point where the situation had become a serious threat to peace not only in the Middle East, but also beyond. It was therefore incumbent upon all, particularly the parties involved, to make a determined effort to reach agreement on those issues which were crucial to a final, definitive and durable settlement. Other conflicts had shown that the willingness of disputants to use all available techniques of diplomacy was an important ingredient of success; the spirit which had brought about the remarkable rapprochement between East and West must be allowed to pervade the current dialogue aimed at bringing an end to the conflict in the Middle East.

35. The United Nations could be an important catalyst for diplomacy at the present, crucial time, and with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee must continue to keep the Palestinian issue at the forefront of international attention and work vigorously to promote an environment in which fruitful negotiations might be held. He expressed the hope that the current meeting and the draft statement before the Committee would serve to provide renewed impetus towards cutting the Gordian knot which the situation in the Middle East had become. In essence, the question of which the Committee was seized was one of respect for the human rights of all peoples of the area, particularly the Palestinians, and in the light of the third preambular paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community, and the United Nations in particular, had an obligation to defend the welfare of the Palestinian people. It was his sincere hope that by the time the World Conference on Human Rights was held in 1993, the plight of the Palestinian people would have been resolved, and it would have been restored to its rightful place in the international community.

36. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that it was a matter of extreme regret and concern that the situation with regard to the Palestinian civilian population in the territory occupied by Israel for the past 25 years had deteriorated following the start of the intifadah in December 1987. Any settlement of the Middle East crisis which bypassed the core issue of the fundamental right of the people of Palestine to self-determination and a State of its own would be inherently flawed and would not bring peace to the area. A solution based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) would be both just and lasting. However, in the meantime, Israel must be prevailed upon to abide by its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and must discontinue its policy of annexing land and building settlements.

37. It was his sincere hope that the profound changes which had occurred in the world would have a positive bearing on the situation in the Middle East. His Government was following with keen interest the negotiations co-sponsored by the United States of America and the Russian Federation, but until such time as a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict was brought about, it was imperative that the United Nations should

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

remain actively involved in the search for peace. The work of the Committee remained as relevant to the cause of the Palestinian people as it had been at the time of its establishment, and it was important for it to enhance its role in the quest for a peaceful and just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

38. The Government and people of Pakistan remained unflinching in their support for the just cause of the people of Palestine and for the important work of the Committee. They fully supported its efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and the draft statement that was before it.

39. Mr. KASOULIDES (Cyprus) said that the world community was commemorating the anniversary amid general disappointment and concern over recent developments which were adversely affecting the situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. It was the view of his Government that the question of Palestine should be solved through implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), but that such implementation could be achieved only through the complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli armed forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories which had been occupied since 1967. Repeated incidents in the occupied territories, causing a large number of casualties among Palestinian civilians, were a source of grave concern to the people of Cyprus.

40. The Security Council had a responsibility to ensure full implementation of its relevant resolutions and guarantee the safety of the Palestinian people. The enhanced role of the United Nations and the decisive approach of the Security Council in its efforts to impose a political climate of conciliation upon world affairs gave grounds for hope for the Palestinian people. All parties to the Middle East peace process should be encouraged to demonstrate goodwill and a spirit of conciliation in order to achieve a permanent solution to the tragic Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a solution was long overdue.

41. He expressed his country's full support for the draft statement before the Committee.

42. Mr. REDZUAN (Malaysia) said that the Government and people of his country paid tribute to the people and the leaders of Palestine in their brave and just struggle to exercise their inalienable rights and to reject the illegal and brutal Israeli occupation of their territory. He associated himself with the statement made by the observer for Palestine, and had been encouraged by the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. His delegation fully supported the draft statement before the Committee.

43. Malaysia recognized that priority should be given to the achievement of the legitimate national and political rights of the Palestinian people, and in that regard supported the Middle East peace process, which should allow for a rightful United Nations role. Meanwhile, it was of the utmost importance that

(Mr. Redzuan, Malaysia)

the Security Council should be actively and continuously seized of the question of Palestine, especially with regard to compliance by Israel with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and with regard to the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

44. Malaysia had been a sponsor of Security Council resolution 681 (1990), and had been involved in negotiations over a period of 51 days to avoid a veto by a permanent member. Accordingly, Malaysia believed that the provisions of the resolution provided a workable machinery that would enable the Security Council to monitor, on a regular basis, the situation affecting the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories, as well as Israel's full compliance with all the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, including the issue of Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and establishment of illegal settlements. Malaysia would like to see an earnest effort on the part of the Security Council to implement its resolution 681 (1990), and looked forward to the next report from the Secretary-General, as provided for in that resolution. The time had come for the Palestinian people to benefit from the new spirit of cooperation that prevailed in the Security Council, which had a special responsibility towards the people of Palestine, whom it must not fail. The Palestinians had suffered and been denied their rights for too long.

45. The CHAIRMAN read out the following draft statement by the Committee on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories:

> "On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People wishes to draw the most urgent attention of the international community to the fact that the occupation still continues, in defiance of the United Nations Charter, its resolutions and international efforts to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the latest of which is the Peace Conference on the Middle East convened in Madrid in October 1991.
>
> The Palestinian people has consistently manifested its determination to resist the occupation and to regain and exercise its inalienable rights, in particular its right to self-determination. It has also expressed its readiness to live in peace in a State of its own, alongside Israel, and has presented peace proposals to this effect. However, Israel has increasingly resorted to armed repression and violations of fundamental human rights in order to maintain the occupation. Through confiscation of land, establishment of settlements, appropriation of natural resources, and efforts to integrate the Palestinian economy into its own, Israel has pursued a policy of de facto annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory. Its illegal annexation of Jerusalem

(The Chairman)

since 1980 and its persistence in changing the physical character and demographic composition of the Holy City remain matters of the greatest concern. These policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, have been universally condemned.

The continued suffering of the Palestinian people after 25 years of occupation poses an urgent imperative to the international community to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people and the attainment of a just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war.

On this twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People wishes to draw once again the attention of the Security Council and the General Assembly to the fact that their resolutions on the question of Palestine remain unimplemented. The perpetuation of the occupation causes persistent tension and conflict in the region, and threatens the credibility of the United Nations at a time of historic importance for its efforts to create a better and more just and peaceful world for all. The international community has a duty and a responsibility to ensure that this unacceptable situation is brought to an end."

46. The draft statement was adopted.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that the statement would be published in the monthly bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/SR.189
15 July 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 189th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 7 July 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine to be held at Malta from 27 to 29 July 1992

Other matters

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT OF ALGERIA

1. The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Committee, expressed sympathy to the Government of Algeria in connection with the tragic death of the President of Algeria.

2. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, President of Algeria.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The agenda was adopted.

REPORT ON THE UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT NEW YORK FROM 22 TO 26 JUNE 1992

4. Mr. CAMILLERI (Malta), Rapporteur, who had served as Chairman of both meetings, said that, for the Seminar, the Committee had decided to focus on a single theme, namely, "Enforcing the fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem". The opening session had been addressed by the President of the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Public Affairs on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations and the Rapporteur himself, in addition to the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group, the representative of Egypt and the representatives of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A total of 4 meetings had been held and 7 eminent experts from North America, Palestine and Israel had presented papers. Representatives of 51 Governments, 9 United Nations specialized agencies, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 14 non-governmental organizations had attended the meeting.

5. The discussions had covered all aspects of the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as well as the responsibility of each high contracting party to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention. In their conclusions and recommendations, participants had taken note of persistent violations of the Convention by Israel, the occupying Power, especially through intensified illegal settlement. They had declared that it was the duty of the high contracting parties to ensure respect by Israel for its obligations under the Convention and had noted that Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 681 (1990) had requested the Secretary-General to develop further the idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties and to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation and to

(Mr. Camilleri, Malta)

report periodically on the matter. They had urged further action pursuant to the provisions of those resolutions. The participants had suggested that the high contracting parties should utilize their consular presence for monitoring purposes and that a United Nations monitoring organization should be established through which the parties would carry out their responsibilities under article 1 of the Convention. They had recommended that the idea of seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice should be developed further and that concrete support should be requested from non-governmental organizations. They had expressed their deep appreciation to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Finally, they had expressed the hope that the Seminar would result in effective action by the United Nations and the international community to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

6. Turning to the Ninth North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, he said that around 200 representatives of 84 non-governmental organizations, three NGO coordinating committees, 15 Governments, two intergovernmental organizations and one other organization had attended. He had addressed the opening session, and a message had been received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and Moderator of the Symposium also had made a statement. The theme had been "Peace is the Fruit of Justice, 25 years of Occupation". Two panels had discussed the topics "25 years of Occupation: Overcoming the Obstacles" and "Preparing the Way for Palestine", respectively. There had also been a "teach-in" on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a resource fair, and eight workshops. One of the recommendations emerging from the workshops was that North American non-governmental organizations should intensify their mobilization efforts and continue to raise public awareness of the needs of Palestinian children and the plight of prisoners and expelled persons. They had also recommended that issues related to the problems of Palestinians living in Israel should be addressed. The peace process should be promoted with members of Congress, Jewish organizations and the general public, and special assistance programmes for women also should be developed.

7. Both the Seminar and the Symposium, which had coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation and the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Lebanon, had enabled members and observers of the Committee and non-governmental organizations to analyse the current situation, to evaluate the strategies pursued thus far and to discuss new strategies for the future.

8. The reports of both meetings would be issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and a brief account also would be included in the monthly bulletin prepared by the Division. In addition, in accordance with past practice, the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar would be annexed to the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to take note of the report on the seminar.

10. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE TO BE HELD AT MALTA FROM 27 TO 29 JULY 1992

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had before it Working Paper No. 5, containing the draft programme for that seminar. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft programme as contained in Working Paper No. 5.

12. It was so decided.

13. The CHAIRMAN read out the list of the members of the Committee delegation to be sent to the seminar.

OTHER MATTERS

14. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the dates of the European NGO Symposium and the International NGO Meeting overlapped partially with the summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Committee had attempted to change the dates, but it was impossible. Therefore, the Bureau would hold consultations on the composition of the delegation in order to ensure that the Committee would be represented until the last day of those meetings.

15. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) expressed his condolences to the delegation of Algeria on the tragic death of its President. With respect to the Seminar and the Symposium, he congratulated those who had made possible the success of those meetings and noted especially the importance of the theme selected, the necessity of protecting the Palestinian people of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. He also appreciated the efforts of the members of the Committee and the participants. With reference to changes being introduced in some United Nations bodies, it was essential to examine methods for ensuring the maximum efficiency in the work of the Committee. He therefore proposed that the matter should be considered and perhaps informal meetings held. It must be borne in mind that the summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to be held before the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, would have a direct bearing on the resolutions which the Assembly would adopt. Therefore, the Committee must be in a position to face those possibilities and adapt to change. His delegation was available to anyone who wished to hold bilateral or multilateral consultations on the subject.

16. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which had just been held in Dakar, Senegal, said that the questions of the Middle East and Palestine had been considered by the Council of Ministers of OAU. Several ministers had expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian and Arab cause. After hearing the report of the

(The Chairman)

Secretary-General of OAU, he had made a statement on behalf of Senegal and had presented the Committee's point of view. The Council of Ministers had adopted a resolution at the end of the meeting. During the summit meeting, Mr. Yasser Arafat had made a statement behind closed doors to African Heads of State or Government. All that documentation would be included in the monthly bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.